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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1597
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 1751
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 3664
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 0331
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1413
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 5106
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 1718
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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KIPR](#) [PGOV](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: RCTV CLOSURE AND THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

11. Summary: Santiago's most influential dailies ran editorials criticizing the lack of a strong stance against Chavez' decision to close RCTV, notably by the OAS and other countries. Influential "El Mercurio" highlighted that the United States has been the only country to firmly oppose Venezuela on this issue and warned about the threat around the world from such individuals. End summary.

12. On June 6, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record "El Mercurio" (circ. 129,000) ran an editorial entitled "How Far Will You Go Chavez?" Quotes:

"The blow against the independent station...is not an isolated event.... It is the beginning of a process to silence all dissenting media.... The official position was that the station and other media were incubating coups and civil unrest.... Now Chavez is using the same arguments against private universities.... There is little doubt that he will next target independent higher educational institutions.... The regime's orientation is unquestionably totalitarian....

"The bland reaction by the OAS and other countries -- with the notorious exception of the United States in the OAS -- feeds Chavez' hegemonic appetite.... He may seem delirious, but there are precedents of individuals like him in world history."

13. On June 5, conservative, afternoon "La Segunda" (circ. 33,000) ran an editorial entitled, "Venezuela's case in the OAS." Quote:

"With resolve and firmness, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice asked OAS Secretary General Jos Miguel Insulza to visit Caracas and draft a report in consultation with the interested parties.... This episode reveals a general awareness among the true democrats about the progressive consolidation of Chavez' socialist dictatorship and the threat of his intervention in the political processes of other countries in the region.... At the same time, it confirms the inefficiency of international organizations to correct these deviations. In particular, the OAS is lacking in implementing the applauded Democratic Charter under specific circumstances."

14. On June 6, conservative, independent "La Tercera" (circ. 101,000) ran an editorial entitled "The Case of RCTV and the OAS General Assembly." Quote:

"Given the numerous expressions of concern over RCTV... and the consensus in the region that one of the key pillars of democracy is freedom of expression, why hasn't the OAS included this issue in its discussion?.... The interest of the OAS in this case should not be seen as undue intervention in Venezuela's internal affairs or as questioning its government.... (The case of) Venezuela is proving

that those who accuse the OAS of being 'inefficient' are right. The shared view in the region is that the closing of the station is one more step in Venezuela's radical political process toward the concentration of power in the hands of its President. This case is a good opportunity to change that view."

KELLY